

JAPAN CHRISTIAN ACTIVITY NEWS

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*Published by the Commission on Public Relations
of the National Christian Council of Japan*

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CABLE CODE : JAPACONCIL, ADDRESS : CHRISTIAN CENTER, 2, 4 - CHOME GINZA, TOKYO, JAPAN

Subscription Rates : Japan ¥700; Foreign (Sea mail) \$2.00; (Air mail) \$3.50.

No. 92

November 1, 1956

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BIBLE TEXT BOOK PROBLEMS

In prewar years, because the Japanese Government did not favor and finally forbade formal religious instruction, recognized private schools, little consideration was given to religious text books. But since the end of the war considerable experimentation has taken place in an effort to produce curriculum material on the Bible which will meet the needs of the senior high schools. The junior high schools present no special difficulty because all the students, except for the individual differences start together. In the senior high schools, however, because some students come up from the junior high departments and others enter from outside non-Christian schools, it is difficult to handle them in the same classes and yet there are good reasons for not separating them. In Doshisha University, for example, whereas 250 students come from its junior high, 377 are from outside schools. At Heian Girls School in Kyoto there are 200 from its junior high as against 130 from outside schools. The proportion differs in every case and only a few schools such as Joshi Gakuin and Joshi Seigakuin in Tokyo, where outside students are not accepted is there no problem. To deal with this subject the Education Association of Christian Schools held a conference at Tokyo International House on October 18-19 and subsequently appointed a special committee to study the subject.

UNITED CHURCH BIENNIAL MEETING

The Nineth General Assembly of the United Church of Christ in Japan met at the Fujimicho Church October 23-26. Delegates totalled 417 representatives of approximately 1,500 affiliated churches.

Among the distinguished delegates present were Hon. Motojiro Sugiyama, Vice Chairman of the Lower House, Hon. Junzo Sasamori, Member of the House Councillors, Dr. Bunroku Arakawa, former president of Kyushu University and Dr. Toyohiko Kagawa. Dr. Takeshi Muto and Reverend Gosaku Okada were re-elected moderator and vice moderator respectively on the first ballot. Among important actions taken were final approval of the creed which was tentatively adopted at the meeting two years ago, reorganization of the headquarters so as to give certain officials greater responsibility, adoption of a budget calling for more support from Japanese sources for evangelism, the establishment of a Board of Foreign Missions, and a strong centennial movement.

This board of Foreign Missions will be primarily concerned with securing pastors and religious workers for overseas Japanese committees and providing transportation to their field of service. But will also recruit specialists whose services are required in countries of the Far East and Southeast Asia and promote theological education for pastors of these areas either through scholarship funds in Japan or by assisting in theological education in Okinawa and elsewhere.

The total denominational budget for 1957 is estimated at ¥16,100 million. This includes headquarters administration - ¥700 Million, Home Evangelism - ¥10,750,000, Cooperative Evangelism - ¥25,555,000, Committee expenses - ¥7,690,000, Publications - ¥452,999,000, pensions - ¥4,100,000 and Building expenses of ¥1,550,000.

In connection with the Protestant Centennial a special commission was created under the chairmanship of the moderator in order to better coordinate the activities and to make the final two years more meaningful. The commission was urged to participate more fully in the program of the National Christian Council.

The evangelistic program for the ensuing year (1957-58) will be "penetration of the gospels into society in general". Included in the breakdown of proposed activities are 1) strengthening the local churches; 2) penetration of society with the Gospel; and 3) Church education emphasis year- 1958.

USSR - JAPAN JOINT DECLARATION

The resumption of diplomatic relations with the USSR is welcomed as a step toward peace by Dr. Takeshi Muto, moderator of the United Church of Christ in Japan. In particular he hails with joy the prospects "that those who have been detained in USSR for eleven long years will be permitted to return to their homeland in the near future" and compares it with the return of the Jews from their captivity in Babylon. Furthermore, he notes that Japan lies between the United State and USSR and therefore is in a position "to help in the resumption of friendly relations between these two world blocs."

SHIN NIKKI CHURCH MEETS

At the Annual Meeting held at Kashiwagi Church October 12-16, the Reverend Hajime Fujita, pastor of the Fukuoka Jonan Church, was elected moderator of the Church of Christ in Japan (Nihon Kirisuto Kyokai). This is commonly known as the "New Church of Christ in Japan" (Shin Nikki) because it is composed of churches formerly affiliated with the prewar church of the same name.

JAPAN CHRISTIAN YEAR BOOK

Editorial responsibility for the Japan Christian Year Book (English) has been assumed by the National Christian Council. The editorial committee for the 1957 edition, which will be composed of missionaries and Japanese, will be announced later. The Kyobun Kwan continues as publisher. The Fellowship of Christian Missionaries, which heretofore has published the Year Book, will publish a separate missionary directory which in the past has been a part of the year book.

DR. KAGAWA SPEAKS

The Fujimicho Church of the United Church of Christ in Japan will conduct special evangelistic services November 2-4 with Dr. Toyohiko Kagawa as the principal speaker. His subjects will be "Creation of the Universe and the Re-creation of Humanity," "The purpose and Spirit of the Universe" and "The Collective Consciousness of the Universe and Christianity."

BIBLE IN GREAT DEMAND

During the first six months of 1956 the Japan Bible Society sold 36,488 copies of the Bible. Overseas orders for the new Colloquial Bible have come from Okinawa, Formosa, Korea, Hongkong, United States, Canada, England, Holland, Iran, New Zealand and Yugoslavia.

DR. MICHIO KOZAKI RETURNS

The chairman of the National Christian Council, Dr. Michio Kozaki, in reporting his impressions of a three months visit to Europe and the United States, states that evangelism in communist countries is very difficult; that prohibition of Christian education in Hungary has forced many Christian schools to close; and that although there is general agreement among Christians in the United States on the necessity of banning nuclear weapons, political considerations prevent its realization.

REV. AKIRA EBISAWA HONORED

The Reverend Akira Ebisawa, former General Secretary of the National Christian Council, and well-known Christian leader, is among those to be honored by the Ministry of Education on November 3 "Culture Day." Mr. Ebisawa was born in Ibaragi Prefecture in 1883, graduated from the Civil Engineering Department of the Sapporo School of Agriculture (the present Hokkaido University), was employed by the Government Railways and served in the Asahikawa Division when the Russo-Japanese war broke out. Under the guidance of Miss M. A. Daughaday and Dr. George M. Rowland, Congregational missionaries in Hokkaido, he became an earnest Christian and in 1911 entered Doshisha Theological Seminary.

After graduation, Mr. Ebisawa served as pastor of the Sapporo Church for ten years. In 1924 he moved to Kyoto, but the following year resigned as pastor of the Kyoto Kumiai Christian Church to become secretary of the recently organized National Christian Council which he served for nearly fifteen years.

Mr. Ebisawa translated numerous articles and three books, "The Psychological Basis of Religious Education," "Christianity and Communism" by the Committee to study a christian Approach to Communism of the Foreign Missions Conference of North America, and "Religious Liberty," by Dr. M. Searle Bates. For decades he was one of the pioneers in the field of religious education and has been connected with the Christian Endeavor Movement for nearly forty years.

IN BRIEF

The Kinjo Gakuin, a girls school in Nagoya established under the sponsorship of the Southern Presbyterian Church Mission, inaugurated a new president, Kintaro Togari (60), Professor of Nagoya University, on October 18 in connection with the celebration of its 67th anniversary.

The Reverend Edward M. Clark, Ph. D. and Mrs. Clark left Japan on October 31 after thirty-six years service in Japan as Missionaries of the Presbyterian Church (North). Dr. Clark has been very active in the field of rural evangelism and was instrumental in founding the Hino Rural Evangelism Theological School of which he was the first president.

Mr. Seiji Giga, director of the Christian Children's Fund who attended the Eighth World Social Welfare Convention in Munich, Germany, this August as official representative of Japan, arrived at Haneda Airport from the United States on October 24.

The sixty-first birthday of Mr. Ugo Nakada, who has worked for forty years in the field of church music and is currently director of Tokyo Chapel Center Choir, was observed by a public concert at the First Insurance Company building (formerly SCAP's GHQ) in Tokyo on October 26th.

